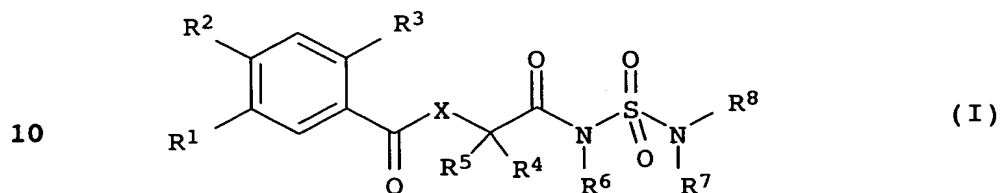


We claim:

1. A 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the
5 formula I

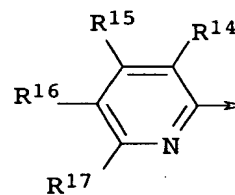
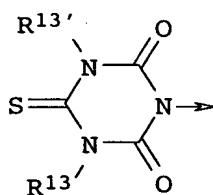
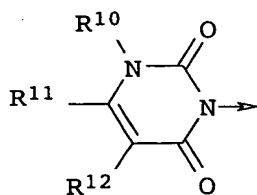


15 where:

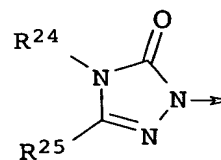
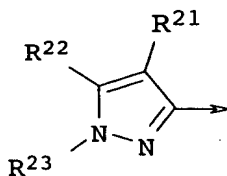
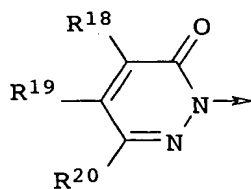
X is oxygen or NR⁹,

R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formulae II-A to II-H,

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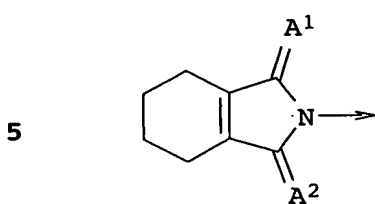
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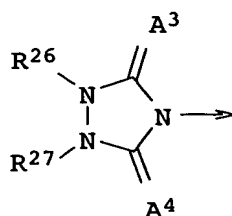
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(II-G)



(II-H)

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R^2 is hydrogen or halogen,

R^3 is halogen or cyano,

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R^4 , R^5 independently of one another are hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy, or R^4 and R^5 together are a group $=CH_2$,

R^6 is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy,

20

R^7 , R^8 independently of one another are hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 -alkyl, C_3 - C_6 -alkenyl, C_3 - C_6 -alkynyl, C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylthio- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfinyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,

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C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, cyano- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxycarbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, amino- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylamino- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,

30

di(C_1 - C_4 -alkyl)amino- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, aminocarbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, (C_1 - C_4 -alkylamino)carbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, di(C_1 - C_4 -alkyl)aminocarbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, phenyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkylphenyl or

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R^7 and R^8 together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached form a saturated or unsaturated 3-, 4-, 5-, 6- or 7-membered nitrogen heterocycle which may optionally contain one or two further heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, sulfur and oxygen as ring members, which may contain 1 or 2 carbonyl and/or thiocarbonyl groups as ring members and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three substituents selected from the group consisting of C_1 - C_4 -alkyl and halogen,

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R^9 is hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy, phenyl, phenyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_3 - C_6 -alkenyl or C_3 - C_6 -alkynyl,

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R^{10} is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or amino,

R^{11} is C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl,

- R^{12} is hydrogen or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,
- R^{13} , $R^{13'}$ independently of one another are hydrogen or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,
- 5 R^{14} is halogen,
 R^{15} is hydrogen or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,
 R^{16} is C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylthio,
 C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfonyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfonyloxy,
- 10 R^{17} is hydrogen or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,
- R^{18} is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or amino,
 R^{19} is C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylthio
or C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfonyl,
- 15 R^{20} is hydrogen or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,
- R^{21} is hydrogen, halogen or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,
 R^{22} is C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl, C_1 - C_4 -haloalkoxy,
 C_1 - C_4 -alkylthio or C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfonyl,
- 20 R^{23} is hydrogen or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,
or
 R^{22} and R^{23} together with the atoms to which they are attached
form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring
which may contain a heteroatom selected from the group
25 consisting of oxygen and nitrogen as a ring-forming atom
and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three
radicals selected from the group consisting of
 C_1 - C_4 -alkyl and halogen,
- 30 R^{24} is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl,
 R^{25} is C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl,
or
 R^{24} and R^{25} together with the atoms to which they are attached
form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring
35 which optionally contains an oxygen atom as ring-forming
atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three
radicals selected from the group consisting of
 C_1 - C_4 -alkyl and halogen,
- 40 R^{26} is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl,
 R^{27} is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl,
or
 R^{26} and R^{27} together with the atoms to which they are attached
form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring
45 which optionally contains an oxygen atom as ring-forming
atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three

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radicals selected from the group consisting of
C₁-C₄-alkyl and halogen,

5 A¹, A², A³, A⁴ are each independently of one another oxygen or
sulfur,

and its agriculturally useful salts.

2. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in claim 1 where R² is
10 fluorine, chlorine or hydrogen.

3. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in claim 1 or 2 where R³
is chlorine or cyano.

15 4. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of the preceding
claims where X is oxygen.

5. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of the preceding
claims where R⁶ is hydrogen.

20 6. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-A in
which R¹⁰ is C₁-C₄-alkyl or amino, R¹¹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl and
R¹² is hydrogen.

25 7. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-B in
which R¹³ and R^{13'} are each independently of one another
C₁-C₄-alkyl.

30 8. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-C in
which R¹⁴ is fluorine or chlorine, R¹⁵ is hydrogen and R¹⁶ is
C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl or
35 C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyloxy.

9. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-D in
which R¹⁸ is hydrogen, methyl or amino, R¹⁹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl
40 or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl and R²⁰ is hydrogen.

10. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-E in
which R²¹ is halogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl, R²² is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,
45 C₁-C₄-haloalkoxy or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl and R²³ is C₁-C₄-alkyl.

11. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R^1 is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-F in
which R^{24} is hydrogen, methyl, difluoromethyl or
trifluoromethyl, R^{25} is methyl or trifluoromethyl or R^{24}
5 together with R^{25} are a chain of the formula $-(CH_2)_4-$.
12. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R^1 is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-G in
which A^1 and A^2 are each oxygen.
- 10 13. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R^1 is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-H in
which R^{26} and R^{27} are each independently of one another
 C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl or R^{26} together with R^{27} are a
15 chain of the formulae $-CH_2-O-(CH_2)_2-$ or $-(CH_2)_4-$.
14. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13
where
 R^2 is hydrogen, chlorine or fluorine,
20 R^3 is chlorine or cyano,
 R^6 is hydrogen and
 X is oxygen.
15. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 14
25 where R^4 or R^5 is hydrogen and the other radical R^4 or R^5 is
 C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or R^4 , R^5 are each methyl.
16. A composition comprising a herbicidally effective amount of
at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid
30 derivative of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt
of I as claimed in any of claims 1 to 15 and at least one
inert liquid and/or solid carrier and, if desired, at least
one surfactant.
- 35 17. A composition for the desiccation/defoliation of plants,
comprising an amount of at least one
3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the
formula I or an agriculturally useful salt of I as claimed in
any of claims 1 to 15 which acts as a desiccant/defoliant and
40 at least one inert liquid and/or solid carrier and, if
desired, at least one surfactant.
18. A method for controlling unwanted vegetation, which comprises
allowing a herbicidally effective amount of at least one
45 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the
formula I or an agriculturally useful salt of I as claimed in

any of claims 1 to 15 to act on plants, their habitat and/or on seed.

19. A method for the desiccation/defoliation of plants, which
5 comprises allowing an amount which is effective as a
desiccant/defoliant of at least one
3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the
formula I or an agriculturally useful salt of I as claimed in
any of claims 1 to 15 to act on plants.

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20. The use of 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid
derivatives of the formula I or their agriculturally useful
salts as claimed in any of claims 1 to 15 as herbicides or
for the desiccation/defoliation of plants.

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